June 14, 2024

CDC STACKS ITS VACCINE COMMITTEE WITH PHARMA-AFFILIATED MEMBERS AHEAD OF JUNE 2024 VOTE ON COVID-19 VACCINES

ICAN | LEGAL UPDATE

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COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS
VACCINE

An ICAN investigation into the background of new members appointed to CDC's highly influential Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) reveals deep ties with the pharmaceutical industry. Later this month, ACIP will vote on COVID-19 vaccine recommendations for the 2024-25 season. In May, ICAN filed a lawsuit against HHS for its failure to comply with a FOIA request related to these ACIP appointments.

Recently, the Department of Health and Human Service (HHS) announced that it had finally filled eight vacant positions and added an additional voting member to ACIP (which advises CDC on which vaccines should be administered within the United States, how often, and to whom), bringing the number to sixteen voting members.

Given that half of the committee is being replaced at once, ICAN submitted FOIA requests seeking more information on these appointments and, when HHS failed to respond in accordance with the law, ICAN brought suit. In the meantime, ICAN conducted its own investigation and, disturbingly, found that seven of these nine individuals have direct financial ties to vaccine manufacturers, and many have received multi-million dollar grants from NIH:

- Dr. Helen Talbot is the new chair of the committee. She has received over $425,000 in research funding from Sanofi Pasteur, over $134,000 from MedImmune (since acquired by AstraZeneca), over $130,000 from AstraZeneca, and nearly $40,000 from Gilead.
- Dr. Edwin Asturias has received more than $65,000 in direct payments and over $3.6 million in associated research funding from various vaccine manufacturers, including Pfizer, Merck, and GlaxoSmithKline since 2016.

- Dr. Yvonne Maldonado has received over $35,000 in general payments and nearly $3.7 million in associated research funding from Pfizer since 2016. She was also the principal investigator on National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants totaling over $11.5 million.
- Dr. Noel Brewer is currently a Merck consultant who has received grants for over $500,000 from Merck, a grant for more than $420,000 from Pfizer, and a grant for $3.5 million from GlaxoSmithKline.
- Dr. George Kuchel received over $13,000 in general payments from Janssen and about $5,000 in associated research funding from Novartis during 2019. He was the principal investigator on over $20.9 million in NIH grants.
- Dr. Helen Chu has received over $65,000 in payments and grants from Pfizer and Merck since 2016. She has served on advisory boards for Merck and Vir Biotechnology, and she has received almost $900,000 in grant funding from NIH.
- Dr. Albert Shaw has received several thousand dollars in payments and grants from GlaxoSmithKline and Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals since 2019. Dr. Shaw has received over $10.4 million in NIH grants for his research.

Five of the new members have already joined the committee, while the remaining four start their term July 1. The next ACIP meeting is scheduled for June 26-28, 2024, where members will be voting on numerous topics including COVID-19 vaccine recommendations for 2024-2025. ICAN will be in attendance and will continue to update our supporters on any new developments regarding the HHS FOIA lawsuit.

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